

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 02958 111253Z

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CONFIDENTIAL VIENTIANE 2958
EXDIS
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, EAID, LA
SUBJECT: LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUМА TO PRESIDENT
NIXON

REF: VIENTIANE 2922

1. I RECEIVED THIS MORNING, APRIL 11, PERSONAL LETTER DATED THE SAME DAY FOR PRESIDENT NIXON FROM PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUМА, ON SUBJECT OF AMERICAN AID TO LAOS. I KNOW FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT THE PRIME MINISTER DRAFTED THIS MESSAGE PERSONALLY. WE WILL FORWARD THE SIGNED FRENCH-LANGUAGE ORIGINAL BY POUCH TO EA/LC FOR DELIVERY TO THE WHITE HOUSE. FOLLOWING IS OUR UNOFFICIAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF THE LETTER:

2. "MR. PRESIDENT:

"AS YOU KNOW, A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION HAS JUST BEEN CONSTITUTED WITH THE APPROVAL OF OUR SOVEREIGN AND, I SINCERELY BELIEVE, WITH THE APPROVAL OF ALL THE LAO PEOPLE. THE LATTER HAVE SUFFERED TOO MUCH FROM THE WAR, IN FACT, NOT TO ASPIRE WITH ALL THEIR HEARTS TOWARD NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND PERMANENT PEACE, WHICH THEY HAVE DESIRED FOR SUCH A LONG TIME.

"WE NOW HAVE AN ENORMOUS TASK BEFORE US. IMMENSE DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE TO OUR KINGDOM. ENORMOUS NATURAL WEALTH HAS BEEN DESTROYED. THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES HAVE BEEN SCATTERED, ISOLATED, AND REDUCED TO A CONDITION OF INHUMAN NOMADIC EXISTENCE. ALL THIS DAMAGE MUST BE REPAIRED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

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"IN THIS REGARD, WE ARE COUNTING GREATLY ON ALL OUR FRIENDS. OUR LITTLE KINGDOM NEEDS, RIGHT NOW, LARGE-SCALE AND CONCERTED AID, IN ORDER TO BUILD THE FOUNDATION OF AN ECONOMY WHICH WILL ALLOW US TO EMERGE FROM UNDERDEVELOPMENT, AND REMOVE OUR DEPENDENCE ON THE CHARITY OF OTHERS.

"WE ARE WELL AWARE IN LAOS OF THE GENEROSITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THEIR PROMPT ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES DEVASTED BY WAR. THE EXAMPLE OF THE MARSHALL PLAN FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE IS COMFORTING EVIDENCE OF THIS. SIMILARLY, WE HOPE THAT, IN REGARD TO OUR OWN CONCERNS, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WILL CONSIDER OUR PROBLEMS AS SYMPATHETICALLY AS POSSIBLE. I KNOW MOREOVER, MR. PRESIDENT, HOW CONSCIENTIOUSLY YOU VIEW THE NEED TO HELP THE INDOCHINESE STATES LIFT THEMSELVES UP FROM THE RUINS AS SOON AS IT WILL BE POSSIBLE.

"THEREFORE, IN THIS CONTEXT, THE NEW LAO GOVERNMENT WILL BE HAPPY AND GRATEFUL FOR EVERY INITIATIVE ON YOUR PART TO PROMOTE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE KINGDOM. SUCH RECONSTRUCTION IS NOW THE BEST WAY TO STRENGTHEN THE PEACE WHICH ALL OF US WISH TO MAKE DURABLE, OPEN THE WAY TO ECONOMIC PROGRESS, AND EASE EVERYONE'S CONSCIENCE." (COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE).

WHITEHOUSE

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O. MR. SARROS.

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